

Session 2024-25
No. 21



Tuesday
8 October 2024

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

Written Statements1
Written Answers.....6

[I] indicates that the member concerned has a relevant registered interest. The full register of interests can be found at <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-interests/register-of-lords-interests/>

Members who want a printed copy of Written Answers and Written Statements should notify the Printed Paper Office.

This printed edition is a reproduction of the original text of Answers and Statements, which can be found on the internet at <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>.

Ministers and others who make Statements or answer Questions are referred to only by name, not their ministerial or other title. The current list of ministerial and other responsibilities is as follows.

<i>Minister</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Baroness Smith of Basildon	Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
Lord Collins of Highbury	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on Trent	Whip
Baroness Blake of Leeds	Whip
Baroness Chapman of Darlington	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Lord Coaker	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence
Lord Hanson of Flint	Minister of State, Home Office
Baroness Hayman of Ullock	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill	Minister of State, Department for Transport
Lord Hermer	Attorney-General
Lord Hunt of Kings Heath	Minister of State, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
Baroness Jones of Whitchurch	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business and Trade and Department for Science, Innovation and Technology and Whip
Lord Kennedy of Southwark	Chief Whip
Lord Khan of Burnley	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Lord Leong	Whip
Lord Livermore	Financial Secretary, HM Treasury
Baroness Merron	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice
Baroness Sherlock	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions
Baroness Smith of Malvern	Minister of State, Department for Education
Baroness Taylor of Stevenage	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Lord Timpson	Minister of State, Ministry of Justice
Baroness Twycross	Whip
Lord Vallance of Balham	Minister of State, Department for Science, Innovation and Technology
Baroness Wheeler	Deputy Chief Whip

© Parliamentary Copyright House of Lords 2024

This publication may be reproduced under the terms of the Open Parliament licence, which is published at www.parliament.uk/site-information/copyright/

Written Statements

Tuesday, 8 October 2024

British Indian Ocean Territory

[HLWS108]

Baroness Chapman of Darlington: My Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (David Lammy), has made the following statement:

On 3 October the United Kingdom and the Republic of Mauritius reached an historic agreement on the exercise of sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean Territory/Chagos Archipelago. The Agreement secures the strategically important UK-US military base on Diego Garcia.

The base on Diego Garcia is critical to national and international security. It has enabled the UK, the US, and our allies and partners to combat some of the most challenging threats to global peace and security, including those from terrorism, organised crime, and instability.

However, since its creation, the British Indian Ocean Territory and the joint UK-US military base on Diego Garcia has had a contested existence. It has been challenged through various international courts and tribunals, threatening the long-term, secure operation of the base. In recent years, this threat had risen significantly. A legally binding decision against the UK seemed inevitable. It was only a matter of time before the UK would have had to choose between breaking international law or negotiating from a position of weakness and risking national security. The situation was also impacting our relationship with the US who did not want the legal uncertainty and strongly encouraged us to strike a deal.

In recognition of this, two years ago, the previous Government began sovereignty negotiations. Despite eleven rounds of negotiations, substantive and difficult issues remained.

This Government inherited unfinished business. We were not prepared to put the security interests of this country or our partners at risk. We therefore prioritised an agreement that fundamentally protected UK national interests, respected the interests of our partners, and upheld the international rule of law. The resulting Agreement fulfils these objectives.

It is strongly supported by our partners, including the United States. President Biden issued a statement ‘applauding’ this historic Agreement within minutes of its announcement. Secretary Blinken and Defence Secretary Austin have also voiced clear public support. India and the African Union have also hailed the Agreement. The agreement strengthens our arguments when it comes to issues like Ukraine or the South China Sea.

Under the terms of the Agreement, the United Kingdom will agree that the Republic of Mauritius has sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean Territory, also known as the

Chagos Archipelago. In return, Mauritius will authorise us to exercise their sovereign rights needed for the long-term, secure, and effective operation of the joint military base. The Agreement covers an initial period of 99 years, with the UK having the right to extend.

For the first time in over 50 years, the base will be undisputed and legally secure, able to operate to its full strategic capability without risk of challenge. The Agreement will mean that the UK and US will continue to operate the base well into the next century.

We have full Mauritian backing for robust security arrangements, including preventing foreign armed forces from accessing or establishing themselves on the outer islands. The base’s long-term future is more secure under this agreement than without it.

The Agreement also addresses the wrongs of the past. This Government deeply regrets the way Chagossians were removed from the islands, and the way they were treated thereafter. Chagossian interests were at the heart of the agreement. For the first time since the establishment of the base, the Republic of Mauritius will be able to implement a programme of resettlement to the islands other than Diego Garcia. The UK and Republic of Mauritius have also committed to support the welfare of Chagossians. The UK will finance a new trust fund for the Republic of Mauritius to use in support of the Chagossian community and remains committed to supporting Chagossians in the UK.

Recognising that relations with our Overseas Territories are of great interest to this House, Members can be assured that this is a unique Agreement that has absolutely no bearing on wider UK government policy regarding our other Overseas Territories. Our sovereignty of the Cyprus SBAs, Gibraltar, Falklands, or any OT is not up for negotiation. Each Overseas Territory has a very different history and they cannot be compared. The UK remains committed to our Overseas Territories family.

This Agreement will be underpinned by a financial package which will be proportionate to the importance of ensuring international security.

This Agreement ushers in a new era in relations between the UK and the Republic of Mauritius, two close partners with deep and enduring ties. We intend to intensify cooperation on a wide range of shared priorities, including security, the environment, and economic growth. This will include cooperation to protect the archipelago’s unique environment.

The Agreement is subject to the finalisation of a treaty which the Government intends to complete over the coming months. Further details will remain confidential until the final version of the Treaty has been signed by both sides. Following signature, the government intends to bring forward a Bill to make the necessary amendments to current legislation to implement the Agreement. Parliament will also have the opportunity to scrutinise the Treaty in the usual way under the Constitutional Reform and Governance (CraG) Act. Both processes are required to talk place before ratification.

Fraud, Error and Debt Bill

[HLWS112]

Baroness Sherlock: My Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (The Rt Hon Liz Kendall MP) has made the following Written Statement:

I would like to advise the House that the Government will bring forward a new Fraud, Error and Debt Bill in this Parliamentary session to be tough on criminals, fair for claimants and provide confidence to the taxpayer.

Fraud and error in the social security system currently costs the taxpayer almost £10 billion a year and, since the pandemic, a total of £35 billion of taxpayers' money has been incorrectly paid to those not entitled to the money – including to criminal gangs. Just as we do not tolerate tax evasion, this government will not tolerate those who defraud the social security system. We will ensure that every pound of taxpayers' money is spent with the same care with which working people spend their own money.

The measures in this Bill are expected to save up to £1.6 billion over the next five years and will extend and modernise DWP's powers to stop fraud in its tracks, recover money lost to fraud and, crucially, help protect claimants who may already be on the edge financially from racking up debt.

The Government is determined to prevent incorrect payments where we can, so DWP will be given new powers to better identify and prevent potential overpayments. These will help officials to ensure eligibility criteria is being met - including being able to see sooner where it is not - which will mean fewer claimants accruing debts and getting into financial difficulty. This will also serve to ensure every claimant is treated fairly.

We will ensure that these powers are proportionate. We will introduce safeguarding, reporting mechanisms and independent oversight, to give greater confidence to claimants that the powers are being used fairly and effectively. DWP staff will receive training on the use of any new powers. We will rely on Codes of Practice where they already exist and, where they do not, we will consult on and produce new Codes of Practice to provide further reassurance on the safe use of the powers.

Some of DWP's fraud powers have not been updated for over 20 years and we are currently misaligned with other government departments and public bodies such as HMRC.

The measures in this Bill will remedy that, giving DWP powers to:

- Better investigate suspected fraud and new powers of search and seizure, so DWP can take greater control of investigations into criminal gangs defrauding the taxpayer.
- Make changes to the penalties system, so that no one found to have committed fraud against the social security system avoids punishment, bringing increased fairness for claimants who do the right thing.

- Allow DWP to recover debts from individuals who can pay money back but have avoided doing so, bringing greater fairness to debt recoveries.

- Through our Eligibility Verification measure, require banks and financial institutions to examine their own data sets to highlight where someone may not be eligible for the benefits they are being paid. This will help DWP identify incorrect payments, prevent debts from accruing for the claimant and help identify where there may be fraudulent activity. Banks will only share very minimal information, and this will only be used by DWP to support further inquiry, if needed, into a potential overpayment.

The powers in this Bill will be legal, proportionate and targeted to reduce overpayments, detect and prevent fraud, ensure prompter investigations and bring greater fairness to the system.

The Eligibility Verification measure will not give DWP access to any bank accounts, nor any information on how claimants spend their money. The proposed new power instead helps verify benefit eligibility, using very limited information from banks and financial institutions. A human being will always be involved in any investigations and any decisions taken afterwards that affect eligibility or benefit awards, as they do now. This measure will not be used on the State Pension.

This legislation will support the delivery of the government's manifesto commitment to safeguard taxpayers' money and demonstrates the government's commitment that it will not tolerate fraud or waste anywhere in public services, including the social security system.

Further details on the legislation will be set out when the Bill is introduced to Parliament shortly.

New Towns

[HLWS110]

Baroness Taylor of Stevenage: My Honourable Friend the Minister of State for Housing and Planning (Matthew Pennycook MP) has today made the following statement:

The Government's vision for a new generation of new towns

The post-war New Towns programme was the most ambitious town-building effort ever undertaken in the UK. It transformed the lives of millions of working people by giving them affordable and well-designed homes in well-planned and beautiful surroundings. The 32 communities it created are now home to millions of people. This government will continue to invest in their regeneration, but we are also committed to bringing forward the next generation of new towns.

This government's new towns programme will include large-scale standalone new communities, but also a larger number of urban extensions and urban regeneration schemes that will work with the grain of development in any given area. The unifying principle will be that each of the new settlements will contain at least 10,000 homes,

although we expect a number to be far larger in size. Collectively, we expect they could provide hundreds of thousands more homes in the decades to come.

This government believes that sustained economic growth is the only route to improving the prosperity of our country and the living standards of working people. Getting Britain building again is integral to kickstarting that growth. Our new towns programme will not just make a significant contribution to meeting housing demand and housing need across England but will also support economic growth by releasing the productive potential of constrained towns and cities across England and ensuring our housebuilding drive is aligned with our industrial strategy and national infrastructure plans.

We have been clear we want exemplary development to be the norm not the exception. The next generation of new towns must be well-connected, well-designed, sustainable and attractive places where people want to live and have all the infrastructure, amenities and services necessary to sustain thriving communities. The 'New Towns Code' will ensure they deliver to the highest standards and help meet housing need by targeting rates of 40% affordable housing with a focus on genuinely affordable social rented homes.

The New Towns Taskforce

We have established an independent New Towns Taskforce to support this mission.

The role of the Taskforce is to advise ministers on appropriate locations for significant housing growth. It will deliver a final shortlist of recommendations by summer 2025, but will have the freedom to share conclusions in respect of specific sites earlier if beneficial to the government's housebuilding drive. The Taskforce will work in partnership with local leaders and communities wherever possible, but its selection of sites will be made in the national interest.

The Taskforce is chaired by Sir Michael Lyons. Sir Michael has had a distinguished career in public service including over 26 years in local government, including 17 years as the chief executive of three major UK local authorities. He has a detailed knowledge of the housing sector, not least through the Lyons Housing Review commissioned by the then Leader of the Opposition, the Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP. He was also a former Chairman of the BBC. Sir Michael is the current non-executive Chairman of the English Cities Fund – which is a joint venture with largescale regeneration developments in London, Liverpool, Plymouth, Salford and Wakefield.

Sir Michael is supported in his role by Dame Kate Barker as Deputy Chair, a former non-executive director at Taylor Wimpey. Dame Kate is experienced in working with the government on housing policy and has previously been commissioned by the government to conduct a major independent policy review of UK housing supply, and subsequently a review of land use planning. Alongside her experience in housing policy, Dame Kate also chairs the trustees of the Universities Superannuation Scheme and has previously been an

external member of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee.

We have appointed a further eight members of the Taskforce, who have a wealth of expertise across housing, local government, planning, housebuilding. Full details on the Taskforces membership can be found [here](#).

The Taskforce has met twice, in Milton Keynes in September and Cambridge in October. At both meetings they met with local partners to understand the key lessons learnt from previous large site delivery.

They will continue their work to deliver a final report by summer 2025, and consider key matters including: the strategic case for new towns; location identification and selection; placemaking; design and standards; funding, risk and institutional investment; and unlocking delivery and innovation.

We will continue to update Parliament on the work of the Taskforce.

Planning

[HLWS107]

Lord Henty of Richmond Hill: My Right Honourable friend, the Secretary of State for Transport (Louise Haigh), has made the following Ministerial Statement:

This statement confirms that it is necessary to extend the deadline for a decision on the application by National Highways under the Planning Act 2008, for the A122 (Lower Thames Crossing) Development Consent Order.

Under section 107(1) of the Planning Act 2008, a decision on an application must be made within 3 months of receipt of the Examining Authority's report, unless the power, under section 107(3), is exercised to extend the deadline, and a Written Ministerial Statement is made to Parliament announcing the new deadline.

The Examining Authority's report on the Lower Thames Crossing Development Consent Order was received on 20 March 2024. The current deadline for a decision is 4 October 2024, having been extended from 20 June 2024 by way of a [Written Ministerial Statement, dated 24 May 2024](#).

The deadline for the decision is to be further extended to 23 May 2025 in order to allow more time for the application to be considered further, including any decisions made as part of the spending review.

The decision to set a new deadline is without prejudice to the decision on whether to grant the application development consent.

Resident Doctors Agreement

[HLWS111]

Baroness Merron: My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Wes Streeting MP) has made the following statement:

I am pleased to be able to inform the House that on 16 September 2024, the Government and the British Medical

Association's Resident Doctors Committee (BMA RDC) (formerly known as the BMA Junior Doctors Committee) agreed a deal on pay for resident doctors (this includes those previously referred to as doctors and dentists in training). This follows BMA RDC agreeing to put the offer to their members.

We will now move to implement the deal, putting an end to strikes which have had a catastrophic impact not just on the country's economy – with NHS strikes costing the taxpayer almost £1.7 billion in the 2023-24 financial year – but to patients and the nation's health, with over 1.5 million appointments cancelled.

Resident doctors are a vital part of our NHS and go on to become the consultants and GPs we need tomorrow. This deal is the first step in rebuilding trust between the Government and the profession. This is a Government that cares for those who care for others.

In the deal, resident doctors will receive:

- an average investment of 4.05% into 2023-24 pay scales effective from 01 April 2023 with a payment to reflect backpay. This is on top of the average 8.8% uplift they have already received for 2023-24; and
- a further consolidated uplift of 6% + £1,000 in 2024-25, in line with the recommendations of the Review Body on Doctors and Dentists Remuneration (DDRB).

This deal will increase the base salary for a full-time doctor starting foundation training in the NHS to over £36,600 compared to around £32,400 before this deal. A full-time doctor entering specialty training will see their basic pay rise to over £49,900 from around £43,900 before this deal. On average resident doctors earn around 1/3 additional to their base salary in overtime and out-of-hours payments.

As agreed in the deal, we have now instructed the DDRB to consider, as part of its pay recommendations, the overall reward package and a career progression for resident doctors to ensure that medicine is an attractive and rewarding career choice to deliver our consultants and GPs of the future.

The Government has also committed to improve the current exception reporting process and to work in partnership with the BMA RDC and other health organisations to review the current system of training and rotational placements.

The BMA RDC will withdraw the rate card for doctors and dentists in training in England with immediate effect.

The Government recognises the significant challenges that affect resident doctors. Whilst this deal has agreed to review parts of the training system, we are also committed to addressing challenges, for example through initiatives under NHS England's Working Lives programme, to improve the working and learning experience of resident doctors in the NHS. We continue to encourage local employers to engage with these policies to address these issues better locally.

This deal marks a significant step forward in fixing the NHS, rebuilding a relationship of trust with doctors and delivering better patient care.

Regulatory Innovation Office

[HLWS109]

Lord Vallance of Balham: I am repeating the following Written Ministerial Statement made today in the other place by my Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology; Rt Hon Peter Kyle MP:

British innovators and businesses are developing world-leading products and services powered by technologies such as artificial intelligence. However, they often encounter barriers and delays from red tape when trying to get started. This is why the government pledged in our manifesto to establish a new Regulatory Innovation Office (RIO) – a priority for ensuring innovation and promoting new opportunities for technologies through focused collaboration in the regulatory environment.

The RIO will help position Britain as the best place in the world to innovate by ensuring safety, speeding up regulatory decisions and providing clear direction in line with our modern industrial strategy. Today, I am pleased to update you on the early progress we have made to establish the RIO and foster safe innovation through regulation.

We are setting up the RIO as an office within DSIT, expanding existing functions such as the Regulatory Horizons Council and introducing new programmes to match our increased ambitions to support innovation. Consistent with our mission-driven approach, the RIO will work closely with other government departments to unlock change, including the Department for Business and Trade, which will continue to oversee wider cross-cutting work on regulator performance.

The new office will have three core pillars of activity: knowledge, strategy and capability building. The knowledge pillar will enhance our understanding of regulatory barriers to innovation, drawing on the work of the Regulatory Horizons Council. To address the most critical barriers, the strategy pillar will set clear priorities for regulatory innovation, aligning with our missions and Industrial Strategy, whilst ensuring safety. Through the capability building pillar, the RIO will work with regulators to ensure they have the necessary tools to achieve our shared goals. For example, it will build on the work of the Regulators' Pioneer Fund to provide strategic grant funding to regulators supporting the responsible development of novel or experimental regulatory approaches and on the work of the Regulators' Innovation Network to share skills and disseminate best practice among regulators.

The RIO's immediate focus will be on priority areas: drones and other autonomous technology, engineering biology, space, artificial intelligence and digital in healthcare. These four areas hold significant potential to

drive innovation in support of the Government's missions, particularly our mission to grow the economy. For example, the UK drone economy is projected to be worth up to £45bn by 2030, if fully adopted. The cross-cutting nature of these emerging technologies, which do not fit neatly into existing regulatory frameworks can mean a slower process in getting them onto the market. The new Office will work closely with government departments, including the Department for Transport, the Department for Health and Social Care, and the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, ensuring that while the RIO actively collaborates on addressing regulatory barriers, regulatory responsibility remains with the relevant Department. The new Office will also bring regulators together and work to remove unnecessary obstacles and outdated regulations to the benefit of businesses and the public, unlocking the power of innovation from these sectors to generate tens of billions of pounds for the UK economy in the coming years.

We will also shortly be progressing a campaign to appoint a Chair. The Chair will offer trusted advice and challenge to both officials and regulators, helping to shape the design of the new office and supporting its successful delivery.

In the coming months, we will work in partnership with industry and regulators to address barriers in these critical sectors and unlock new opportunities.

Alongside the RIO, I am pleased to share our wider progress in supporting regulatory innovation. These

advancements demonstrate how we can foster an environment where innovation thrives by adapting our regulatory approach:

- We are publishing on GOV.UK our response to the Regulatory Horizon Council's quantum report, accepting 11 of the 14 recommendations (and accepting in principle the remaining 3). This will see the UK become the first nation to outline its regulatory approach to quantum technologies, providing certainty to businesses and encouraging the responsible development of the sector. A copy of this report will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.
- We are announcing the winners of the first round of the Engineering Biology Sandbox Fund. The sandbox will accelerate regulatory reforms for engineering biology-derived products and improve the quality of decision-making when assessing these products.
- Working closely with the Cabinet Office, we are publishing voluntary screening guidance for the providers and users of synthetic nucleic acid. The guidance contributes to the UK's vision of unlocking the societal and economic benefits of engineering biology research and innovation, whilst mitigating associated risks. The guidance keeps the UK at the forefront internationally of fostering responsible innovation in this transformative technology.

I am confident that together we can unlock Britain's dynamism and innovation, and kickstart economic growth.

Written Answers

Tuesday, 8 October 2024

Employment: Iron and Steel

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to protect the jobs of steelworkers. [HL915]

Baroness Jones of Whitchurch: Steel is vital for a vibrant, secure economy. This Government is working in partnership with trade unions and industry to secure a green steel transition that's both right for the workforce and delivers economic growth.

We have already agreed a better deal for steelworkers at Tata Steel and are continuing negotiations with British Steel. However, we are clear we need long-term jobs, not short-term subsidies.

We will publish a steel strategy in spring. This will guide our commitment to invest £2.5 billion in partnership with the private sector as part of our wider commitment to invest in jobs and boost growth across the UK.

NHS: Cost Effectiveness

Asked by *Lord Lucas*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Centre for Perioperative Care's CPOC Manifesto: A Blueprint for NHS Efficiency, published on 12 April, in the light of the review of the NHS by Lord Darzi of Denham. [HL1123]

Baroness Merron: In light of the review of the National Health Service by Professor Lord Darzi, which highlights the importance of driving productivity in hospitals, the Government welcomes the manifesto of the Centre for Perioperative Care (CPOC) and will consider its recommendations. The Government is already working with NHS England to improve perioperative care, which can reduce length of stay, improve patient outcomes, and increase productivity. In May 2023, NHS England published guidance setting out five core perioperative care requirements relating to the care of adult patients awaiting planned inpatient surgery. These measures address the key objective of identifying health needs as early as possible in perioperative pathways, and then using time on the waiting list to optimise health, through optimisation of both existing health conditions and of health-related behaviour. NHS England is working to oversee and support implementation, and will continue to do so throughout 2024/25. In addition, NHS England is also undertaking work on other areas addressed in the CPOC manifesto such as drinking, eating, and mobilising after surgery.

Prescriptions: Prisons

Asked by *Lord Bradley*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to amend the National Health Service (Charges for Drugs and Appliances) Regulations 2015 to enable the electronic transfer of prescriptions between prisons and community pharmacies. [HL957]

Baroness Merron: NHS England is considering extending the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) to Detained Estate health services in England, and the Department is engaging with them on this work.

Skilled Workers: Vacancies

Asked by *Lord Mann*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the current level of national shortage of skilled (1) bricklayers, (2) roofers, (3) plasterers, (4) carpenters, and (5) electricians. [HL892]

Baroness Jones of Whitchurch: The Government is working with industry to increase the capacity of skilled workers, including those in the trade professions, to deliver its infrastructure, housing and wider built environment objectives. It is essential that all construction trades working within the built environment have the right level of skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours, as required by the Building Safety Act.

The Government has already announced the introduction of Skills England which will be crucial to providing high quality training to the next generation of construction workers to deliver the built environment we need.

We do not currently have the specific and accurate information on shortages. The Department for Business and Trade is working across Government to understand the full impacts on shortages for the construction sector and the built environment and infrastructure commitments that the Government has set out.

UK Seabed Resources: Deep Sea Mining

Asked by *Lord Randall of Uxbridge*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the expected (1) process, and (2) timeframe, for any future decisions on continued sponsorship of UK Seabed Resources Limited's two International Seabed Authority exploration contracts. [HL985]

Baroness Jones of Whitchurch: UK Seabed Resources Limited has two International Seabed Authority exploration contracts, UKSR1 and UKSR2. These have an initial period of 15 years with the contract period of UKSR1 ending in 2026 and UKSR2 ending in 2027. The UK Deep Sea Mining (Exploration Licences) Regulations 1984 states that exploration licences can be extended for successive periods of 5 years. Any decisions on the future of these licences will be made in

consultation with the company and other relevant UK Government departments. The Department for Business and Trade will ensure a robust process is in place and that any decisions made are in line with statutory requirements.

Asked by Lord Randall of Uxbridge

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have conducted, or plan to conduct, stakeholder consultations on any future decisions to re-sponsor UK Seabed

Resources Limited's two exploration contracts with the International Seabed Authority. [[HL986](#)]

Baroness Jones of Whitchurch: A stakeholder consultation has not been conducted on any future decision to re-sponsor UK Seabed Resources Limited's two exploration contracts. The Department for Business and Trade, working closely with the relevant departments, will ensure a robust process is in place and that any decisions made are in line with statutory requirements.

Index to Statements and Answers

Written Statements.....	1
British Indian Ocean Territory	1
Fraud, Error and Debt Bill.....	2
New Towns.....	2
Planning.....	3
Resident Doctors Agreement.....	3
Regulatory Innovation Office.....	4
Written Answers.....	6
Employment: Iron and Steel.....	6
NHS: Cost Effectiveness	6
Prescriptions: Prisons	6
Skilled Workers: Vacancies	6
UK Seabed Resources: Deep Sea Mining	6